

THE OPPORTUNITY OF NORTH CAROLINA.

It is in Converting the Raw Materials of the Farm Into Finished Products—The Enormous Drain on North Carolina Resources in Sending \$10,000,000 Outside the State Each Year for Supplies Our Own Farmers Could Produce—The Way Out.

[Graduating Address of Wm. Kerr, Jr., of Alamance Co., N. C., at A. & M. College, Raleigh, May, 1904.]

The rapid, almost marvelous, development of cotton manufacturing in North Carolina has led many people to think that our future lies in manufacturing and not in agriculture. It is true that there are now in the State great opportunities for all sorts of ordinary manufacturing enterprises, but these ordinary manufacturing industries will soon seem only as the light of a cigarette in the nerveless mouth of some senseless boy, when compared to the full sunlight of the agricultural manufacturing on which is to rest North Carolina's future.

AGRICULTURAL MANUFACTURING.

By agricultural manufacturing I mean the conversion of the raw products of the farm into such finished products as beef, mutton, pork, lard, milk, cream, butter and cheese. You will all agree with me in holding that the greatest profit nearly always comes from converting the raw materials into finished products. This is the profit that the citizens of the State should in future make themselves. The saving of this profit will mean the difference between poverty and wealth; between illiteracy and education; between serving and being served.

Do not for a moment believe that I want North Carolina to stop growing cotton and other regular staple crops. Far from it. But what I do want is to see each farmer adopt a correct rotation of crops in which legumes will frequently appear, and to see every little farmer, as well as every big farmer, keep such machines as horses, cattle, sheep, and swine, to convert into finished products the raw materials made by his rotation. Farmers will find no trouble in disposing of these finished products in North Carolina at great profits, and at the same time will have the by-products from these animal machines to return to their soils. This will build up the single-crop worn lands by adding the two great requisites of our exhausted soils, namely, nitrogen and humus.

That North Carolina with its matchless climate free from intense heat and extreme cold, from wet seasons and dry seasons, and having the greatest variety of soils ranging from mountain tops to alluvial plains, is admirably adapted to raising almost everything that goes to furnish the American table, cannot be doubted. But still there remains the old bugaboo that the Southern farmer is handicapped, that he has no market for his produce.

AN ASTONISHING SHOWING FROM RALEIGH.

Believing that even for the people of North Carolina to supply their own home market would give employment to a great number of our farmers that might be anxious to take up this kind of work, I visited the different grocerymen in Raleigh and inquired how much of the different farm products they received from out of the State. By this means a fair estimate was made that there were shipped from outside of the State into Raleigh each year—

Seven thousand seven hundred pounds of butter.

Five thousand pounds of oleomargarine.

Thirty-six eight hundred pounds of cheese.

One hundred and fifty thousands pounds of lard.

One hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds of hams and other meats.

Six thousand eight hundred cases of corned meats.

Six thousand five hundred pounds of flour.

Six hundred and fifty cases of cereals.

Three thousand three hundred and fifty cases of canned vegetables.

Seven hundred cases of canned fruits.

Six hundred cases of canned milk.

Two thousand five hundred barrels of fancy apples and pears.

Five hundred tones of bran.

Eighty thousand bushels of corn.

One thousand one hundred tons of hay.

\$10,000,000 ANNUALLY SENT OUT OF THE STATE.

If we make from these figures for Raleigh an estimate for the entire State by multiplying these figures by fifty (which would be the least amount possible when you take into consideration the large number of towns east of here, where nothing but cotton is raised), we will see the enormous amount of money now being sent from the State for these commodities. In just the articles mentioned, we each year send to other States, the enormous sum of \$10,350,400 from our poverty. Of course our poor farmers should be trying to make these products themselves to enable this capital to remain in the State in order to develop our latent forces which are only waiting for such a fine chance.

For example, the butter and oleomargarine estimated for the State, and valued at 25 cents per pound, would give an income of \$158,750, and the cheese valued at eleven cents per pounds would give \$172,400, or both taken together, an income of \$331,150. Think how much would be added yearly to the wealth of our State if we produced this butter and cheese here! Think how many young men who are now leaving the State could find most profitable employment by producing these necessary and always salable articles! Why at present we do not even have so far as I can learn, a single truly called creamery in this State. Some States without one-fifth our advantages are reaping a rich harvest from these industries. Iowa, for example, makes money out of dairying on lands valued at from \$50 to \$150 an acre and pays freight on our cotton-seed meal to feed its cows at the same time.

HOW WE ARE KEPT POOR.

To supply the demand of the State it will take 7,500,000 pounds of lard, valued at 12 cents per pound, and amounting to \$900,000, and 7,800,000 pounds of hams and other meats valued at fifteen cents per pound and amounting to \$1,100,000, making a total value of \$2,060,000 for the hog industry alone. Why do not our farmers raise these hogs instead of buying them from the Western farmer? No other State can more cheaply produce peanuts, sweet potatoes, sorghum and other crops best suited to raising hogs than can North Carolina.

There are shipped into the State each year 55,000 tons of hay, valued at \$15 per ton, the least ever paid for it, giving a total value of \$825,000. Just think how many wheat fields, after being reaped, are allowed to grow up in weeds when they should be producing from one and one-half to two tons of cowpea and clover hay, and also the marvelous waste of our stalks allowed to accumulate in the corn fields in the place of being gathered, shredded and put on the market to supply this great demand which constantly brings large shipments from Kentucky and other Western States.

There are 125,000 barrels of apples shipped into the State yearly. These apples, at a low valuation, are worth \$500,000, yet no better apples can be produced than those of Western North Carolina. Why does not Western North Carolina supply this great demand and save for our people this half million dollars?

Some people may say that it is due to insufficient railroad accommodations. But as long as the inhabitants of this favored land try to raise cereals and do not devote their time to raising fruits, the railroads will never improve. Let the farmers go to work and produce materials to be shipped and the railroads will give them sufficient accommodations to get their produce to market.

THERE IS A MARKET HERE: LET US SUPPLY IT.

From what has been said it is seen that we have a large home market to supply, and when this is done, there will be plenty of markets waiting for our surplus. We have all the natural resources that could possibly be desired. Everything is ready, waiting for good trained men to take the helm and start the good work. This is the need of North Carolina, for we must have men trained in the different lines of work.

I am far from believing that the sole thought of a State's citizen should be fixed on money-making. But I am also far from believing that a State's sole condition should be one of comparative poverty. These things may be material, and yet when our children ask for bread we do not want to give them a stone; when they ask for an education we do not want to say, "Our poverty is too great to give it to you;" when they ask for a slight share in the comforts and joys of life, we do not want longer to say, "Those things are for better trained neighbors—not for you."

THE STATE'S OPPORTUNITY.

The training for these happy home-making industries should start from the time the child begins school, and be continued through his school course. Surely it is no unreasonable requirement to direct a child's thoughts towards the path of life he is to follow. Why should a child who is to make his living by farming not know something of the soil, of plants, of insects, of bacteria, of markets? These things are easily learned. He has for centuries been taught arithmetic in order that he might know how to count. Why not now teach him also his business in order that he may have something to count? He has for centuries been taught geography that he might learn of distant lands. Why not teach him also some elementary science that he may know something of the land on his own farm? He has for centuries been taught history in order that he might know how dead men lived. Why not also teach him some agriculture in order that he may know how live men live?

Along this line is the opportunity of North Carolina, and wise indeed are the first to realize it.

Late Corn.

Common field corn may be planted up to July 1, with the certainty of its maturing enough for feed, if not for grinding. The early Dent corn, white or yellow, is also a good variety for planting after small grain. The Hickory King, if raised South several years, is better than the Dent, for it is excellent for meal or roasting ears. The cob is very small. The Mexican June corn is said to be fine if planted July 1 to 20 on rich land. We have seen the variety planted early and it made nothing but stalk with a little sharp shoot about twelve feet from the ground. For roasting ears alone, plant the large varieties of sugar corn. That does better when raised here a year or two.—Selected.

Nearly all farmers plant cotton too thick. We can remember when one and a half to two and a half bushels of seed to the acre were planted. Even now most farmers plant from one and a fourth to two bushels per acre. No farmer should plant more than three pecks to a bushel per acre. A peck per acre would be plenty if the seed could be properly distributed. To plant too many seed is to waste part of them and to arrange for a lot of unnecessary work in chopping. We have cotton too thick. Years ago around here cotton was planted in rows two and three-quarters to three feet apart. Now we have the rows three to three and a half feet wide. We still have them rather narrow. In the best cotton growing parts of the South the usual width is four feet, and some have them four and a half feet. The writer has no cotton rows less than four feet wide. Cotton rows should be from three feet to four and a half, according to the fertility of the soil and amount of manure used. It should have proper distance between the stalks and the rows.—J. M. Beatty, Johnston Co., N. C.